



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

*No matter who you are, or
where you are on life's journey,
you are welcome here!*



FirstCongregationalUCCIndy



FCINDY DOT ORG

www.fcindy.org
317.257.5397

7171 N. Pennsylvania St.
Indianapolis, IN 46240

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Welcome to your Spiritual Home!

We celebrate being a Just Peace making, Green for care of Creation, and WISE (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive and Engaged) for mental health church, with an Open and Affirming covenant supporting the LGBTQAAL+ community.

Whether you choose to join us online or in-person, we believe we are called together by Jesus to be a transforming presence for God in the world. **We are a place to belong, a place to heal and a place to love.** At First Congregational we recognize God as a loving, creating, all-encompassing Spirit who is not limited by usual human boundaries. Therefore, we practice the use of inclusive, expansive, and non-gendered language when speaking of and to God.

We welcome all who worship with us today and include **all ages** in our hybrid worship service. We invite guests and members to fill out a Welcome/Prayer card found in the pew holder, and put it in the offering plate. Children are invited to play quietly in the “pryground” at the front of the church, or use a “Quiet Bag” found in the Narthex.

***Disclaimer:** Today’s worship service is being live-streamed. While the focus will be on the worship leaders, anything you say or do may be on film. If you have any questions or need to ensure you are not on camera please speak with our minister.

Pastoral Care: You may reach out to Pastor Sarah for Pastoral Care. She may be reached at (386) 478-9012 or pastorsarah@fcindy.org.

In-Person Office Hours: Cassidy (admin) is in office 9-12 on Thursday, meeting with Pastor Sarah by appointment.

Out of concern for community health, we request that you remain up to date with your vaccinations. Mask as needed. Please stay home if you feel unwell.

We celebrate our worship leaders today:

Rev. Dr. Sarah Lund (she/her), Preacher

Sean Baker (he/him), Music Director

Scott Semester (he/him), Worship Song Leader

Mayflower Singers

Mike Kessler, Percussion

Jacob Smith, String Bass

Handbells

Ben James (he/him), Media Technician

Cristy James and Sue Chapman, Liturgists

DECEMBER 17, 2023

11:00 AM

*Please speak the **bold**-printed words in unison.*

Asterisk () indicates those who choose to may stand in body/spirit.*

PRELUDE

Overture of Carols

arr. Baker

INTROIT

The Universe Is Bending

Mayflower Singers

Entering Into the Sacred

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

TRUMPET FANFARE

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: We come in today wondering.

All: Will there be joy?

One: We come in today hoping.

All: Will there be joy?

One: We come in today trusting.

All: There will be joy. Amen.

OPENING PRAYER

INVITATION TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

All: Holy God, sometimes we steal joy from our own lives because we don't listen to your voice inside of us. We steal joy from others with cruel words said in anger or old patterns repeated. And finally, we steal joy from everyone as we collectively build systems that oppress. We protect our own lies and pass down pain to the next generation.

*One: Gracious God, forgive us and remind us that you created us for joy.
Amen.*

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

PEACE MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION

WELCOMING NEW MEMBERS

*SONG OF CENTERING #107 Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn
New Century Hymnal

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

SCRIPTURE HERALD Luke 1:39-45 Cristy James

MODERN HERALD Sue Chapman

RESPONSE TO THE READINGS

One: The Holy One is trying to speak to us now.

All: We struggle to hear God's good news.

One: The Word of God is here for us today.

All: We will focus ourselves on the joy of God. Amen.

MESSAGE The Heralds of Joy Rev. Dr. Sarah Lund

*SONG OF REFLECTION #106 My Heart Sings Out with Joyful Praise *New
Century Hymnal*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & JOYS AND CONCERNS

MEDITATION

PASTORAL PRAYER

PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR (from UCC Book of Worship)

Our God in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

PRAYER RESPONSE

Mayflower Singers

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

INTERLUDE

Angels We Have Heard on High

D. Wagner

*DOXOLOGY *Song of Thanks*

**All praise to God we now do sing.
Our gifts this Advent now we bring.
This waiting time of joy we share,
As for the Christ our hearts prepare.**

OFFERTORY PRAYER

All: Gracious God, thank you for this community gathered and for all that we share together. Bless these gifts of our labors and our hearts, so that all the world may be overwhelmed with your joy. Amen.

*SONG OF SENDING #132

Joy to the World!

New Century Hymnal

*BENEDICTION

BLESSING SONG

The Universe Is Bending

Mayflower Singers

POSTLUDE

God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen

arr. Baker

Music for Sending Forth

Opportunities for Giving, Sharing, Fellowship and Fun!

Because of you, our church changes lives! Thank you to all who have turned in a pledge and/or Time & Talent sheet to support the ministries of First Congregational in 2024! While there are many ways to support the congregation, our annual campaign provides a chance to think about the choices we make with our money, time, and talent in support of First Congregational. For those who have not yet responded, please prayerfully consider all the ways that our church blesses your life and the lives of others, and turn them in by December 31. You can: Put them in the offering plate during worship OR, mail them to the church. Thank you to all who contribute in so many ways to our ministries!

Christmas Goodies: If you have some cookies and other Christmas goodies that you would like to share, please bring them for refreshment times on Sundays in December and Christmas Eve. You can leave them in the fridge in the kitchenette next to the Parlor. Thanks!

New Constitution & Bylaws Adopted: At a congregational meeting on December 10, 2023, the proposed Constitution & Bylaws was adopted. It is now posted in the Meeting Minutes & Docs on www.fcindy.org. Thank you to the CBL Team, as well as the hearty discussions and feedback that were involved in formulating this new document.

Youth Group will Resume in the New Year: Join the FC Indy Youth Group, beginning in January, each Friday from 6:30-8:30PM. We will have pizza and games and be a safe space for middle school and high school students.

Cards to Our Church Family – Please sign the cards on our “card stand”, for those celebrating birthdays, or in need of prayers.

Food Donations to Northside Pantry – Help those with hunger insecurity by bringing donations of canned or boxed food, and place in the baskets in the Narthex.

Sunday Mornings at 10:00 AM – Several options are available on Sundays before worship. Join our Adult Ed group for thoughtful study and discussion (upstairs at church). Or go to choir practice to rehearse for that morning’s singing; all skill levels welcome!

Spiritual Support Group, Thursdays at 5:00pm (Zoom) – This group openly invites anyone seeking spiritual care concerning well-being. Contact Pastor Sarah at pastorsarah@fcindy.org, or 386-478-9012. ***This group will begin meeting only on the first Thursday of each month, beginning on December 7th.



Thank You for Your Financial Gifts! Our current Covenant Outreach focus is related to our Just Peace Covenant which includes supporting the following organizations: Faith in Indiana, Peace Learning Center, Exodus Refugee Immigration and Family Promise.



Gifts of single dollars, or those designed to Covenant Outreach, are divided evenly to these groups, unless otherwise specified. Also, your pledge or undesignated gifts are greatly appreciated to support the mission and ministries funded by First Congregational’s operating budget. You can place gifts in the offering plate, mail a check to the church, or give online at www.fcindy.org

Mental Health Support:

The 988 Lifeline: 988 is now active across the United States. (call or text) **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI.ORG):** information and referral services: 1-800-950-NAMI (6264) **The Trevor Project hotline** offers support for LGBTQIA+ youth and families struggling with mental health challenges at 1-866-4-U-TREVOR (488-7386) and www.theTrevorProject.org

THIS WEEK AT FC INDY:

Tuesday, December 19	3:00 PM	Staff Meeting (Zoom)
Wednesday, December 20	7:00 PM	Church Council
Sunday, December 24	10:00 AM	Adult Education
Sunday, December 24	11:00 AM	Christmas Eve Worship
Sunday, December 24	7:00 PM	Candlelight Jazz Service

Christmas at FC INDY

Christmas Eve, Sunday, December 24:
 11:00 am, Sunday Morning Service
 7:00 pm, Candlelight Jazz Service

ALL ARE WELCOME!

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Today's Readings

SCRIPTURE HERALD: Luke 1:39-45

Within a few days Mary set out and hurried to the hill country to a town of Judah, where she entered Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. As soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she exclaimed, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! But why am I so favored, that the mother of the Messiah should come to me? The moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who believed that what our God said to her would be accomplished!"

MODERN HERALD

Toi Derricotte and/or Austin Channing Brown

The poet Toi Derricotte revolutionized Black feminism with one line in a poem, "joy is an act of resistance." With that one line, she gave Black women an opportunity to rethink the work of racial justice. Finally we were given permission not to just be mules for the work of racial justice- carrying a kicking and screaming country into a better future. We were given permission to also see our joy as giving a middle finger to white supremacy. And when we stop to think about this one beautiful sentence, it unlocks a world of truthfulness.

Historically, America has both been completely uninterested in the joyfulness, the happiness of Black women and has actively worked to villainize our joy. Our dancing. Our hair. Our laughter. Our desire for luxury and access and opportunity. Our sexuality. Our dress and jewelry. Our jokes and conversation. Our songs. Black girls and Black women alike have our joy misconstrued as disrespectful, arrogant, or perpetually inappropriate. Our joy is suspicious. And what right have we to joy when we have so much work to do? Ms.

Derricotte, with the wonder that only poetry can unearth, gives an answer. We aren't just pursuing racial justice when we are organizing or voting or protesting or speechmaking or volunteering or working... we are also pursuing justice when we indulge in joy.

Priests for Equality. The Inclusive Bible. Sheed & Ward. Kindle Edition.



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